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Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.2/55/L.43

Statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly

A. Requests contained in the draft resolution

1. Under the terms of the operative paragraphs 2, 3 and 15 of draft resolution A/C.2/55/L.43, the General Assembly would:

(a) Decide, in the light of the recommendation of the Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee for the Conference at its first session, to convene the second session of the Committee from 5 to 9 February 2001 in New York, at which the Committee will undertake the first formal reading of the draft programme of action and consider other relevant matters, while noting that the final session of the Committee will be held in New York from 2 to 6 April 2001;

(b) Request the Secretary-General to defray the cost of participation of two government representatives from each least developed country in the second and final sessions of the Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee through the use of extrabudgetary resources, and further request that the Bureau keep the matter under regular review on the basis of information provided by the Secretary-General of the Conference;

(c) Take note of the current level of regular budget resources available to the Office of the Special Coordinator for Least Developed, Landlocked and Small Island Developing Countries, and request the Secretary-General to ensure that the same level of resources are made available throughout the remainder of the current biennium, including through redeployment and the use of other resources at the disposal of the Secretary-General.

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B. Relationship of the proposed activities to the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001 and the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001

2. The activities arising from the above paragraphs of the draft resolution relate to programme 9, Trade and development, of the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001,[1] in particular subprogramme 5, Least developed, landlocked and island developing countries, and to the programme of work included under section 11.A, Trade and development of the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001,[2] with particular reference to the same subprogramme 5.

C. Additional requirements (paragraph by paragraph)

Paragraph 2

3. It is recalled that, initially, the Preparatory Committee was to hold only one session in 2001 in New York prior to the Conference. Now, by paragraph 2 of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would decide that the Preparatory Committee should hold two sessions in 2001 in New York. The additional session would entail additional requirements for the travel of staff from Geneva to New York to service the Preparatory Committee and for conference servicing. Details of those requirements are as follows:

Travel and subsistence allowance (10 staff for seven days)	$25 000
Conference servicing at full cost (five days, two meetings per day, interpretation and documentation in six languages)	$202 809

4. The holding of the meeting of the Preparatory Committee in New York would constitute an exception to section I, paragraph 4, of General Assembly resolution 40/243 of 18 December 1985, in which the Assembly stipulated that United Nations bodies should plan to meet at their respective established headquarters, which in this case is Geneva.

Paragraph 3

5. The cost of the participation of two government representatives from each least developed country in the two sessions of the Preparatory Committee would be met from extrabudgetary resources. The requirements are estimated to amount to $1,178,000 for the two sessions of the Committee in 2001. There are sufficient extrabudgetary resources presently available in the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Trust Fund for Least Developed Countries to defray the costs of the travel of two representatives of each least developed country to the second session of the Preparatory Committee. The Secretary-General will deploy all his efforts to mobilize additional voluntary contributions to enable the participation of two representatives from each least developed country in the final session of the Committee. Should there be a shortfall in the availability of extrabudgetary resources, the Secretary-General would bring that situation to the attention of the Bureau of the Preparatory Committee.

6. It should be noted that the payment of travel expenses to representatives of least developed countries, as envisaged in paragraph 3 of the draft resolution, would

imply an exception to the provisions of General Assembly resolution 1798 (XVII) of 11 December 1962, regarding the payment out of United Nations funds of travel and subsistence expenses to members of organs and subsidiary organs of the United Nations.

Paragraph 15

7. The proposals of the Secretary-General regarding the programme of work of UNCTAD for the biennium 2000-2001 and the related resources to carry out that programme of work, including the preparations and the holding of the Conference, are contained in sections 11.A and 21 of the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001.

8. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 54/235 of 23 December 1999, the Office of the Special Coordinator was provided with 48 work months of general temporary assistance equivalent to one P-5, one P-4 and two P-3 posts. The related resource requirements were estimated at $541,400 and have provided the Office of the Special Coordinator with additional capabilities to coordinate United Nations system-wide preparations for the Conference, including with the regional commissions and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs; assist and support country-level preparations for the Conference; provide advisory services to least developed and landlocked developing countries and small island developing States; support the preparation of thematic reports and substantive inputs for the Conference; carry out research in support of country-level and regional-level preparations for least developed countries; and liaise with civil society and entities, including non-governmental organizations, the private sector, media and academia in preparation for the Conference.

9. It is not possible, at this stage, to identify regular budget resources from within section 11.A that could be redeployed in order to ensure the same level of support to the Office of the Special Coordinator throughout the remainder of the current biennium.

10. Forty-eight work-months of general temporary assistance were provided for a period of 17 months for the preparation of the Conference (January 2000-May 2001). The requirement of the same level of resources for the seven months remaining in the biennium (June to December 2001) would call for a further 20 work-months of general temporary assistance ($223,000) of one P-5, one P-4 and two P-3 posts, less any amount of the general temporary assistance provided earlier that may remain unspent at the end of the Conference in May 2001. However, at present, it is anticipated that the full amount of the general temporary assistance provided by the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session would be fully utilized by that time.

11. The $223,000 mentioned above would provide the Office of the Special Coordinator with the additional capabilities to coordinate United Nations system-wide follow-up to the Conference; ensure immediate follow-up in collaboration with the development partners of least developed countries to the decisions and agreements that are anticipated to emanate from the Conference; provide advisory services to least developed countries acting upon the outcome of the Conference; and ensure liaison with civil society and non-governmental organizations in translating the decisions of the Conference into immediate action.

12. The following table provides a summary of the additional requirements (in thousands of United States dollars) referred to in the above paragraphs:

Paragraphs	*General temporary assistance*	*Travel of staff*	*Total*	*Conference services*
2				202.8
3		25.0	25.0	
15	223.0		223.0	
Total	**223.0**	**25.0**	**248.0**	**202.8**

D. Potential for absorption

13. With regard to the additional conference-servicing requirements, it should be noted that provision has been made in the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001, not only for meetings already programmed at the time of budget preparation, but also for meetings or extensions of meetings that might be authorized subsequently, provided that the number and distribution of meetings are consistent with the pattern of meetings of past years. On that basis, should the General Assembly adopt the draft resolution, no additional resources would be required under section 2, General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services, of the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001.

14. Concerning the resource requirements for general temporary assistance and travel, it should be noted that these requirements are new and that consequently, no related provisions were included in the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001.

E. Contingency fund

15. It will be recalled that, under the procedures established by the General Assembly in its resolutions 41/213 of 19 December 1986 and 42/211 of 21 December 1987, a contingency fund is established for each biennium to accommodate additional expenditures derived from legislative mandates not provided for in the proposed programme budget. Under this procedure, if additional expenditures are proposed that exceed the resources available from the contingency fund, the activities concerned can be implemented only through redeployment of resources from low-priority areas or modifications of existing activities. Otherwise, such additional activities will have to be deferred to a later biennium.

16. No activities could be identified at this stage for termination, deferral, curtailment or modification under section 11.A, Trade and development, of the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001, in order to accommodate the additional requirements of $248,000 referred to above.

17. Should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/C.2/55/L.43, an additional provision of $248,000 would be required over and above the resources included in section 11.A, Trade and development, of the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001. This provision would represent a charge against the contingency fund and, as such, would require a related additional appropriation.

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 6* (A/53/6/Rev.1).

[2] Ibid., *Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 6* (A/54/6/Rev.1, vol. II).